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BY

DOROTHY DONNELL CALHOUN

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FITZGERALD PUBLISHING CORP'N, 18 Vesey St., N. Y. C.

100 PER CENT AMERICAN

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT FOR GIRLS

By

DOROTHY DONNELL CALHOUN

Author of

"Cupid's Column," "Parlor Patriots"

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Vesey Street

New York

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CHARACTERS

MADAME ANTOINETTE CLEMANCE

Who runs "The Select School"

ABIGAIL CORNTOSSEL....Her friend from Pumpkintown

MISS AUGUSTA SCOTT.....Known as "Great Scott"

MISS FRIEDA VON HINKEL.....Music Teacher

MISS GLADYS SMITH.....Military instructor

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE.....A Society dame

A RED CROSS WORKER.....

MARY MURPHY..An Irish detective of the Secret Service

GRETCHEN.....The little German maid

SELECT PUPILS OF MME. CLEMANCE'S SELECT SCHOOL

MARJORIE

Nicknamed MARJE, possessed of a vivid imagination

DOROTHY

....Nicknamed DOTTY DIMPLE, vain, fond of candy

ETHEL.....Nicknamed GIGGLES, and the name fits

BERTHA.....Nicknamed BERT, tomboy type

MARGARET.....Nicknamed BABE, very slangy

ABBY LOU.....Nicknamed DIXIE, Southern type

NOTE.—MISS GLADYS SMITH and MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE, the RED CROSS WORKER and MARY MURPHY can double. If a smaller cast is desired, the number of scholars may be reduced and the lines divided among the rest.

TIME.—The present. LOCALITY.—New York.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—One and one-half hours.



DEC -7 1918

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no 1

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

MADAME ANTOINETTE CLEMANCE. Middle-aged. Stylishly dressed.

ABIGAIL CORNTOSSEL. Middle-aged, extremely countrified person wearing a paisley shawl, bonnet. Carries a bird cage, carpet bag and umbrella. Wears steel-rimmed spectacles.

MISS AUGUSTA SCOTT. Known as "Great Scott" among the girls. She is of the teacher type, prim, old-maidish and plain.

MISS FRIEDA VON HINKEL. A music teacher, fifty years old, though she tries to look twenty-five. Wears an elaborate yellow wig, is fussily dressed and has a girlish manner.

MISS GLADYS SMITH. A charming military instructor, but in secret a German spy. She wears a khaki uniform.

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE. Well-dressed, rather airy, uses lorgnette.

RED CROSS WORKER. Wears the Red Cross costume and is business like, efficient, earnest, and energetic looking.

MARY MURPHY. A female Irish detective; wears a mannish-looking tailor-made suit.

GRETCHEN. A little German maid with hair combed in two braids. Wears large gingham apron and later changes to a small white apron and maid's cap.

PUPILS of the Select School, at first entrance wear khaki uniforms or school suits.

DOROTHY carries a vanity case and box of candy.

MARJORIE, ABBY LOU and ETHEL at second entrance wear men's clothes with short wigs and mustachios, beards, etc. MARJORIE wears a white wig, mustachio, etc.

MARGARET, BERTHA and DOROTHY at second entrance also are disguised, one being blackened up, DOTTY wearing a veil and still carrying the vanity case; while the third pupil wears the make-up of an old lady.

PROPERTIES

Stage properties as per scene plot at head of Scene.
Duster, piece of paper and pencil, white cap and white apron, and pitcher of water for GRETCHEN.

Property parrot and cage, carpet bag containing knitting, umbrella and steel-rimmed spectacles for ABIGAIL.

Calling card, check book, fountain pen and lorgnette for MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE.

Elaborate yellow wig for MISS VON HINKEL.

Man's white wig for MARJORIE.

Razor, suspenders, and cigarettes for MISS SCOTT.

Vanity bag, box of candy and large veil for DOROTHY.

Costumes to dress up in as disguises for PUPILS.

Whistle and bell off stage.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience. R., means right-hand, L., left-hand; D.R., door at right; D.L., door at left. UP, toward rear of stage; DOWN, toward footlights.

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SCENE.—*The reception room of MADAME CLEMANCE'S Select School, as is indicated on a banner hung over the piano, center back. Doors right and left. Two windows in the back on either side of the piano are hung with thick curtains. Window seat under one or both windows. Screen stands against the wall R. Couch against wall L. Table, rocking-chair and other chairs occupy center of the room. Desk down R. Clock and telephone on desk. Newspaper, a very large, bulky book, and a vase of flowers on table. Sewing-bag containing embroidery, a ball of gray wool and a half knit sock, and a pair of scissors, are on the piano. A statue of George Washington (or any other statue available) stands on the piano, also music on piano rack. A book case occupies one corner. Mirror on L. wall. The room may be otherwise as elaborate or simple as desired. DISCOVERED at rise, GRETCHEN, the little German maid dusting the reception room in an extremely desultory fashion, pausing to listen to voice off stage and the sound of shuffling feet.*

VOICE (*off stage R., crisply*). Left! Right! Left! Right! form column by fours! Forward, march!

GRETCHEN (*wistfully*). Ach! dose American Fräuleins! Soch goot times they haf. It iss a very wise thing to be in America geborn. (*She starts to dust the piano, and stops to look at the music on the rack*)

VOICE (*off stage L.*). Gretchen! Gretchen! Have you dusted George Washington yet? I noticed that his face was disgraceful this morning.

GRETCHEN (*hastily dabbling at the statue on the piano*). Ya, Madame.

VOICE (*off L.*). And the table legs? And the book case? and the piano-bench?

GRETCHEN (*frantically rushing from one to the other of the objects mentioned*). Ya, ya, Madame! I yust finish.

MADAME ANTOINETTE CLEMANCE (*ENTERING D.L., and addressing GRETCHEN severely*). How many times must I remind you not to say Ya! Ya! in my school? Suppose one of my patrons were to hear you, each of those ya's might lose me five hundred dollars a year. It is not at all difficult to learn new ways of speaking if you apply your mind to it. Look at me! (*She draws herself up complacently*) No one would guess that I was born Ann Clemons instead of Antoinette Clemance, and raised in Pumpkinville Center, Vermont, where people say "Land sakes alive!" and "Did yeou ever hear tell?" (*She glances into the mirror and pats her fashionable hair*) I am, I flatter myself, *tout a fait Parisienne*. It is only necessary to apply one's mind. Do you understand?

GRETCHEN (*nodding violently so that her braids flap with each word*). Oh, ya, ya! Madame, I—I vat you say? I stand under.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*angrily forgetting her poise and reverting to Pumpkinville as she shakes GRETCHEN*). For the land sakes! Did yeou ever hear tell of such stupidity. (*She flounces out D.L., furiously, leaving GRETCHEN to stamp her foot*)

GRETCHEN. Ach dey all laugh at my speakings. But I show them some sings—wait und see! (*Looking cautiously about her she takes a piece of paper from her dress and begins to write laboriously, tongue in the corner of her mouth*)

VOICE (*off R., sharply*). Halt! Shoulder umphs! Present umphs! Atten-shun!

GRETCHEN (*writing triumphantly*). Soon dey shall haf von big surprise. I will—vot iss it dot Miss Bertha say? I will their goat gotten. (*She hears footsteps approaching and hastily folds the paper and slips it into her dress, almost guiltily. She is dusting the piano furiously when MADAME CLEMENCE and MISS AUGUSTA SCOTT ENTER, D.L., the sheets of music flying in all directions*)

MADAME CLEMENCE (*sternly*). Gretchen!

GRETCHEN. Ya,—I mean ya-as, Madame! (*She restores order*)

MADAME CLEMENCE (*continuing a conversation with MISS SCOTT*). Frieda Von Hinkel is a very charming young lady, my dear Augusta, a bit flighty perhaps but we must make allowances for youth. And her terms are so reasonable. I really cannot see that golden hair is a good reason for discharging her.

MISS SCOTT (*acidly*). But her name! It makes one think of Limburger cheese and pretzels—Von Hinkel! Von Rubbish!

MADAME CLEMENCE (*thoughtfully*). Yes, her name is unfortunate. I think I had better ask her to change it to something Frenchy—chic! It would not do to have any of the parents of my Select Young Ladies question my patriotism.

MISS SCOTT (*sniffing*). A Von Hinkel by any other name would smell as—Limburgery! However, I did not expect my advice to be taken. I know quite well that I am not young and stylish, and have not frizzy tow-colored hair like some people I could mention. I am merely Augusta Scott, humble, plain, of no account to anyone. (*She sniffs pathetically*)

MADAME CLEMENCE (*hastily changing the subject, pointing to door R. through which can be heard the tramp of marching feet*). At least you can find no fault with the new instructor of Military Manoeuvres, Gladys Smith. There is nothing unpatriotic about that name. Half the people in America are named Smith. And what an ardent patriot she is. Why, she even knows the words of the second verse of the "Star Spangled Banner."

MISS SCOTT (*grudgingly*). I suppose she is, but in my day it wasn't considered quite the thing for a young lady to go about in—ahem—trousers.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*shocked*). Oh no! My dear Augusta, trouserettes. There is a great difference. Trousers are shocking, trouserettes are simply patriotic.

MISS SCOTT (*grimly*). Well, if there is any difference it must be in the name, it certainly isn't in the appearance. And then that motor boat of hers—such an odd fad for a woman. (*Resignedly*) But as you say, I am out-of-date and old-fashioned. I don't expect anyone to listen to me, oh no! (*A ring is heard at the front door. GRETCHEN hastily takes off her big gingham apron and puts on a maid's apron and cap which she takes from the window seat and EXITS D.R.*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*assuming a striking attitude at her desk, finger on cheek*). Augusta, kindly hand me the volume of "Burton's Great Thoughts for All the Year." (*MISS SCOTT takes a ponderous volume from the table and hands it to MADAME CLEMANCE who opens it and appears absorbed in the contents. MISS SCOTT sits grimly rigid in a stiff pose, thus they wait for their visitor*)

GRETCHEN (*off stage*). Ya, ya, Madame, the ladies are—vot you say, all in. (*Ushers in THE RED CROSS WORKER, a capable, energetic-looking woman in uniform*)

THE RED CROSS WORKER. Good-morning, Madame Clemance. They have sent me down from headquarters to see whether I couldn't interest your young ladies in war work.

MADAME CLEMANCE. Quite unnecessary, my dear woman! I assure you we are already interested, intensely so. I think I may say without boasting that you will find few schools where more is being done to inculcate the virtue of patriotism in the young mind than is being done here.

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*puzzled*). Indeed? For example—?

MADAME CLEMANCE. Every room in the school, in-

cluding butler's pantry and laundry has been equipped with a new, first-quality American flag. An Instructor in Military Manoeuvres has been hired to teach the young ladies the art of warfare. We also sing the "Star Spangled Banner" twice a day.

MISS SCOTT. You have forgotten to mention that the picture of the girls in their—hem—trouserette uniforms has appeared recently in two Sunday Supplements.

MADAME CLEMANCE. We have also a collection box in the front hall where the girls deposit all Lincoln pennies, date 1912, and five-cent pieces bearing the date 1899 for the relief of the Belgians. So you see we are, as they say, doing our bit.

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*dryly*). Hmm! I fancy I mean something rather different. If I might see the young ladies themselves——

MADAME CLEMANCE (*looking off R.*). Here they come now. Pray speak to them as much as you like. You will excuse us for a few moments—I think the butcher is waiting to speak to me. (EXIT with MISS SCOTT and GRETCHEN D.L., as D.R. opens to admit the GIRLS and MISS GLADYS SMITH, all in becoming khaki uniforms. If desired they may wear school suits, but MISS SMITH should be in uniform)

BABE (*pointing to DOTTY DIMPLE who wears a vanity case over her khaki coat and carries a candy box*). I thought I should die laughing when Dotty put down her gun so's to powder her nose. Isn't she a scream, girls?

DOTTY (*defensively*). Well, my cousin's in the army, and he told me that soldiers used powder, so there.

MARJE (*amazed and interested*). He *did*, what kind?

DOTTY (*laughing slyly*). Gunpowder! (*They all laugh*)

MISS SMITH (*reprovingly*). Girls! Don't you see you have a visitor? (*She stands before THE RED CROSS WORKER, very stiffly, clicks her heels and salutes. The GIRLS all salute*)

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*smiling*). Dear me, what military maids! I suppose you are all getting ready to drive ambulances at the front?

BERTHA. Well, not exactly. But we can do the dandiest drill! Come on, girls, let's show her!

A simple flag, gun or military broom-drill may be introduced; but may be omitted; if so the lines of Bertha, "But we can do the dandiest drill" to those of the Red-Cross Worker, "It doesn't help our soldiers very much, does it?" must also be omitted.

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*clapping her hands*). Very pretty! But after all, though it's fun for you, it doesn't help our soldiers very much, does it? I suppose you are all doing Red Cross work, too?

ABBY LOU (*in Southern drawl*). Ah should suttinly say we are. Didn't we sell ice cream and fancy pincushions at the last benefit bazaar? Ah was nearly wo'n out afthwards.

ETHEL (*giggling*). And we held up automobiles and pasted stickers on them—a dollar each. Tee-hee! That was great fun.

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*rather sternly*). Yes, but don't you do other things that aren't so much fun? Roll bandages and make cotten garments and knit socks and sweaters? Fancy pincushions won't keep the boys warm next winter. And all the money in the world isn't of much use without willing hands to turn it into gauze bandages and pads. (*The girls all look resentful. Miss SMITH has picked up a newspaper and is reading and listening with a strange smile*)

BABE (*frowning*). But bandages are so stupid. And there are plenty of old ladies to knit things, grandmothers and aunts and old maids.

MARJE. I can't even sew on my buttons—fancy making a nightshirt. Good-night!

DOTTY DIMPLE. I couldn't knit to save my soul, or any soldier's sole either. Everybody laugh please, that's a joke.

ABBY LOU. Ah kaynt knit, either, but yo-all should see the butterflies Ah embroidhad on the guest towels when mah shister was mahied. They suttinly were pretty.

THE RED CROSS WORKER (*curtly*). Embroidering butterflies when the whole world is at war. Girls! I am ashamed of you. With our boys going over the sea at the rate of two hundred thousand a month (*The words seem to hold great interest for MISS SMITH*) we are soon going to need millions of garments for them. It's easy enough to get people to do showy things for the Red Cross—selling ice cream, taking up collections, getting up entertainments, but the real test of patriotism is whether you are willing to do the drudgery, the things that people won't see you doing and applaud you for. It's up to us women of America from six to sixty to help our men win the war by giving them plenty of warm clothes to wear and taking care of them when they're wounded. Putting on becoming uniforms and learning pretty drills isn't what's needed. Think it over! I'm sure you'll decide that there is something more helpful you can do to show that you're 100% American! [EXIT D.R., leaving the girls gazing after her resentfully.]

BABE. Well, what do you know about that? I'll bet I'm more of an American than she is anyway! My mother belongs to the Colonial Dames and the D. A. R. and the S. P. C. A.

BERTHA (*hotly*). My great great great great great grandfather came over on the *Mayflower*!

ETHEL (*giggling*). Well, mine just missed the boat. He came on the next one.

ABBY LOU (*pouting*). Mah fatha's bought four Liberty Bonds. We've got so many cards in ouh windows we caynt see out. Thrift stamps and Red Cross cards and Hoover stickers.

DOTTY (*heroically*). And I've given up sugar in my coffee—that is I would have given it up if I drank coffee! (*She helps herself to candy and passes the box*) Have some caramels, girls, and stop worrying over what she said. Nobody could be more patriotic than we are.

MARJE (*thoughtfully*). Something we could do to prove we are 100% American! I wish we could think of

something like that and show her. After all maybe there's something to what she said——

BABE (*interrupting*). Oh, forget it. Your conscience is working overtime. Come on, let's get dressed. If "Great Scott" sees us in these patriotic pantaloons she'll have a conniption fit! (BABE, BERT and DOTTY stroll out arm in arm, D.R. ETHEL sits down at the piano and plays "Over There," while the other two girls dance to the music and hum the words)

THE THREE (*impressively, with appropriate gestures*). "We're coming over and we—won't—go—back—till—it's—over, Over—There!"

ETHEL (*giggling*). George Brown says he's going to bring me a German helmet to decorate my room. Won't that be perfectly swell?

MISS SMITH (*smiling disarmingly*). So you have a friend in the army, Ethel? What does he say about going across? Do they expect to sail soon?

ETHEL. In a fortnight, he thinks—of course he isn't supposed to know the exact date but there's a big convoy sailing soon.

MARJE. My Cousin George is in France. We had a letter the other day. He says the Americans are going to make a big attack soon, but the censor cut out the place where it's coming off. I think it's awfully rude to read other people's letters like that, why there might be something *private* in them. It's all nonsense—non-sensorship.

MISS SMITH. How interesting it must be to hear from people in the very middle of things. But there's nobody to write about them to poor little me. (*She sighs*)

ABBY LOU (*sympathetically*). Well, we'll tell you everything we heah. And in exchange maybe you-all'll take us out in youh motor boat sometime.

MISS SMITH (*rising, smiling about at them all*). Perhaps—some time. [EXIT D.L. as the girls look after her admiringly.]

MARJE (*enthusiastically*). Isn't she a peach! And so brave, too, to go out on the water every day in spite of the German submarine they say is somewhere off the shore!

ETHEL (*looking idly at the newspaper*). Here's an article about it now. (*Glances over the page*) Ooo! Girls, just look at this! (*Reads dramatically*) "All good Americans are warned to beware of spies." Isn't that thrilling!

MARJE (*looking over shoulder*). "The Secret Service has just issued a warning for all citizens to be on the watch for German spies who are working everywhere. It will be rendering the utmost patriotic service to catch them and hand them over to the Department of Justice." (*Claps her hands in excitement with a little squeal*) Girls, let's catch a spy! That woman hinted that we weren't patriotic enough, let's prove that we are.

ABBY LOU (*doubtfully*). That's suttingly a grand ideah, Marje, but what I think is where'll we get ouh spy? (*They look at one another doubtfully*)

ETHEL (*giggling*). You said something then, Abby Lou. A spy hunt without a spy would be like Hamlet with Hamlet left out. You don't expect to find one in this school, do you?

MARJE (*stoutly, pointing*). It says they are *everywhere*, so why not— (*She breaks off as MISS FRIEDA HINKEL ENTERS D. L.*)

MISS HINKEL (*pleasantly*). Goot morning, young ladies. I think I haf left my embroidery in here. Ach, yes! Here is it. (*Takes her embroidery bag from the piano. The girls look at each other with sudden suspicion*)

ABBY LOU (*aside to ETHEL*). Did you hear that *ach*?

MARJE (*sweetly*). Oh, Miss Hinkel, what are you making—mayn't we see?

MISS HINKEL (*opening bag and drawing out a doily. As she does so the embroidery scissors fall to the floor*). Ver' pretty, nein? A friend gets herself married soon, it is for her I gemacht it. (*The girls admire it, she replaces it and EXITS D. L.*)

ETHEL (*giggling*). Her language is like her hair, always curled up. But you don't think—?

ABBY LOU. Why not? You don't suppose that spies go around beginning theh conversation with "I'm a

German spy, how do you do?" And she's suttainly not an American——

MARJE (*pointing*). Look there! (*They all stare suspiciously at scissors on the floor, and advance toward it on tiptoe*)

ABBY LOU (*capturing it*). Embroidery scissors—she must have dropped them. (*She examines them, then points triumphantly*) "Made in Germany!" Now what do you-all think? (*They stare at one another, then all slowly nod their heads*)

MARJE. That's certainly a clue. But we must be absolutely sure before we hand her over to the Department of Justice. We must catch her in the very act.

ETHEL (*clapping her hands*). I know! What was it Sherlock Holmes always did when he was going to watch a murder or something? He put on a disguise. All good detectives put on disguises.

ABBY LOU (*with sudden inspiration*). The suits of our brothers we wore in the school play. (*They all laugh gleefully and hurry out, D. R., nearly colliding with GRETCHEN, who is ENTERING with a pitcher of water*)

GRETCHEN. Everybody in America always in a hurry vas! (*Puts fresh water into the vase of flowers on the table, singing as she does so "Roeslein, Roeslein, Roeslein rot, Roeslein auf der Heide"*) If Madame Clemance hear dot she haf a—vot you say—a foot, no, a feet. But I show her. Dey don't know vot I do. (*Takes out her paper and begins to write mysteriously, stopping abruptly as BERT, BABE and DOTTY ENTER, D. R., arm in arm, in their school clothes*)

BABE. Hullo! What's this you're writing, Gretchen? A love letter? (*She tries to look over her shoulder. GRETCHEN hides the paper in confusion*) Come on, let's see it. Maybe Dotty here could give you some pointers.

GRETCHEN (*confusedly*). Nein; nein. It iss noddings. (*Door bell rings*) Hear you nod dot bell? I must go—(*She runs out D. R. The girls saunter to the table and glance at newspaper. They all see the article at the same time and point to it*)

ALL. "All Good Americans Warned to Beware of Spies!"

BERT (*skipping over the article*). "Warning for all good citizens—mm—German spies who are working everywhere—mm—patriotic service——" (*Loudly*) Listen, girls.

BABE (*putting hands to ears*). For the love of Mike, Bert, we're none of us deaf—at least we weren't before.

BERT (*crestfallen*). I was just going to tell you a secret.

BABE (*sarcastically*). You sounded that way. But go ahead, let's have it—*pianissimo*!

BERT (*looking about her cautiously*). Did you notice the way Gretchen acted just now?

DOTTY. She didn't want us to see what she had written on that paper. You don't mean——

BABE (*hastily*). Sh! Sh! (GRETCHEN RE-ENTERS with a letter. *The girls regard her furtively*) Gretchen, you never told us where you were born. Was it in this country?

GRETCHEN (*wonderingly*). Nein, Miss Margaret, I was in Cologne geboren. [EXIT D. L. with the letter

BABE. Cologne! That's in Germany. I remember because my sister went there when she was abroad. She said it was spelled so different from the way it smelled.

BERT (*solemnly*). It's our duty as citizens to—to shadow her.

DOTTY (*dubiously*). But if we tagged around after her wouldn't she get suspicious?

BABE (*in a superior tone*). Of course she would, you poor simp. We'll have to disguise ourselves. I'll dress up as an old lady—you can black your face with shoe polish——

DOTTY (*tossing her curls*). Indeed I won't black my face. (*Regards herself admiringly in the mirror*) How do I know whether shoe polish is good for the complexion?

BERT (*impatiently*). You make me tired, Dotty, the way you Mary-Pickford around here. Put a veil over your precious complexion then, and I'll black up. It's lucky I haven't any looks to worry about! (*They start out D. R., DOTTY'S voice trailing back*)

DOTTY (*sweetly malicious*). Oh, I think if anything, shoe blacking would be rather becoming to you, Bertie dear.

ENTER D. L. MADAME CLEMANCE, *reading a letter with pleased expression*

MADAME CLEMANCE. "I have been looking everywhere for a school suitable for my daughter, Gertrude Evangeline Ermytrude. It must be a place where her studies will not be allowed to interfere with her pleasures in any way and where she will be surrounded by uplifting influences. It must be a place above all, cultured, and perfectly *comme il faut*. Having heard favorably of your school I shall call upon you this afternoon and if satisfied will enter my daughter with you at once, yours sincerely, Mrs. Neulie Ritchie." Land sakes alive,—er—that is I would say very gratifying I am sure, very cultured and *comme il faut*. If there's anything I flatter myself it is the absolute *comme il fautness* of my Select School for Select Young Ladies.

ENTER D. L. MISS HINKEL *with her embroidery bag*

MISS HINKEL (*deferentially*). Goot day, Madame. Gretchen said you wished to speak mit me.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*with some embarrassment*). Er, yes. The fact is I have been wondering whether you ever gave any thought to the matter—hm—of changing your name.

MISS HINKEL (*tossing her head*). Ach, I haf had chances. I am not a—vat you say—old maiden because I haf not had chances.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*soothingly*). Of course, my dear Miss Hinkel, many of them I am sure. I simply mean that—er—in view of the present circumstances some name rather more—er—truly American—

MISS HINKEL (*slowly*). So. You think then one cannot be a goot American unless one haf the name Smit or Jones or Robinson? You think because one's name iss

German one's heart is German, too. Ach, ver' well. I care not vat you call me. I vill be Mees Schmit, or Mees Jones or Mees Robinson, and then eferyone will say I am a goot American.

MADAME CLEMANCE. I felt sure you would understand. Thank you so much, Miss—er—Jones! (*She rustles out D. L. MISS HINKEL shows that she is hurt and angry. She walks about the room, then shakes her head impatiently*)

MISS HINKEL. Ach. What matters what they call you? It iss what iss in the heart that matters. I haf my reason nod to wish to leafe this school till the war iss over. There iss nod another place, the naval station so near. Thank Gott no one haf guessed why I am here. (*She sits, opens her bag, and feels around in the bottom. As she draws out some undistinguishable object, she drops it back in great haste and confusion as* MISS SCOTT ENTERS D. L., *which does not escape the unfriendly gaze of the other*)

MISS SCOTT (*very coldly*). You are embroidering, I see.

MISS HINKEL (*sweetly. Sits*). Your eyesight haf not suffered from your age, Miss Scott. I am embroidering.

MISS SCOTT (*sniffing*). I do not lace in my waist, Miss Hinkel, I do not attempt to correct whatever mistakes my Creator has chosen to make in my appearance. I do not try to conceal my age.

MISS HINKEL (*sympathetically*). Nein—no one would efer suspect you of being any older than you look—impossible.

MISS SCOTT (*glaring*). In my day, Miss Hinkel, ladies dressed as such. They did not endeavor to appear like a member of a musical comedy chorus or an advertisement for a hair tonic.

MISS HINKEL (*patting her hair complacently*). But times haf change in the last fifty years, Miss Scott. The world, she iss improving right along.

MISS SCOTT (*tossing her head*). Fiddlesticks! Stuff and nonsense! It's going to the dogs.

MISS HINKEL (*rising sweetly, and folding her work*).

I am so sorry, Miss Scott, but I muss a lesson give. Some odder time, yes. You shall tell me somesings more about dose time when you were a girl. I am so interest in ancient historiee! (*She goes out, D. L., leaving MISS SCOTT speechless with rage*)

MISS SCOTT. The impudence of that woman is beyond belief. If I am not very much mistaken she will disgrace the school yet. Well, it's a comfort to think that whatever happens I can say with a clear conscience, "I told you so!" (*As she faces the audience with this remark the D. R. opens to admit MARJE, ABBY LOU and ETHEL, in men's clothes with short wigs and mustachios, beards and sideburns. They all apply a finger to their lips and say in chorus*)

ALL. Hist! (*MISS SCOTT starts violently and turns, almost overcome by what she sees*)

MISS SCOTT. If you're after my money you will have to turn your backs. It's in my stock—that is, in one of my garments not immediately accessible.

MARJE (*in a deep voice*). Madame, fear not. We are not here to rob you.

ETHEL (*striding forward, arms folded impressively*). We are detectives on the trail of a German spy.

MISS SCOTT (*faintly*). A spy, mercy on us. Are you sure?

ABBY LOU (*gallantly*). I am suah of one thing, Madame, and that is that I am addressing one of the—the most charming and superior membahs of the—er—fair sex! (*Bows low*) It is an honah to meet you and a pleasuh to enlist you in ouh endeavah.

MARJE (*aside*). Bully for you. Put on another record.

MISS SCOTT (*blushing and casting down her eyes*). Oh, sir! This is so—so sudden! Really, I hardly know how to reply.

ETHEL (*deep bass rumble*). Tell us, have you noticed any suspicious actions about here lately?

MISS SCOTT (*reflecting*). It does seem to me that I saw that little idiot of an Ethel Barrett studying this morning. That is unusual, but I hardly think she could

be a spy. That takes a certain amount of brains——

ETHEL (*violently*). What!

MISS SCOTT (*startled*). I beg your pardon?

ETHEL (*in a stifled voice*). I said it was *hot*. (*She glares at the other girls who are endeavoring to stifle their mirth*)

MARJE (*to the rescue*). Think carefully. Remember it is the—ah—(*Glancing at the paper and then resuming glibly*)—"the duty of all good citizens to aid in bringing to justice the German spies who are thought to be working everywhere." Is there no one you distrust—no one you suspect?

MISS SCOTT (*with a start*). That sly, malicious, malingering, meddlesome, metriculous, made-up Von Hinkel cat.

ABBY LOU (*very professional manner*). Aha, now we are coming to it. And what is it that you suspect about her, Madame?

MISS SCOTT (*viciously*). Her hair. It's much too good to be true.

ETHEL (*forgetting her rôle for a moment*). For the love of Pete!—hem! (*In a deep tone*) Has it ever occurred to you that it might be a wig?

ALL (*excitedly*). A wig!

MISS SCOTT (*delighted*). And she certainly behaved very strangely when I came into the room just now. She had just taken something out of her embroidery bag, but when she saw me she started violently and thrust it back again.

MARJE (*taking notes, à la Sherlock Holmes*). Another clue. Did you happen to catch a glimpse of the—hm—object?

MISS SCOTT. It seemed to be round and greyish black.

ETHEL (*excitedly*). No doubt a bomb.

ALL (*appalled*). A bomb!

ABBY LOU (*persuasively*). I'm suah those bright eyes of yours, Madame, noticed that it was made of iron?

MISS SCOTT (*coquettishly*). Oh, you men! Well, perhaps I *did* notice that.

MARJE (*eagerly*). And it was smoking? Oh, do say it was smoking. It makes such a splendid clue.

MISS SCOTT (*flirtatiously*). Since you speak of it I believe I did see a little smoke, a very, very little.

ABBY LOU (*taking her hand sentimentally*). Madame, heah is youh chance to prove yourself 100% American. For the sake of ouh glorious country, the land of the free and the home of the brave, for the sake of the Star Spangled Bannah long may it wave, we must know (*Dropping her voice to matter-of-factness*) what's in her top bureau drawer. And you must search it for us.

MISS SCOTT (*startled*). Oh, no. I am too much of a lady to pry—and besides I'm afraid it is locked.

ETHEL. No, it isn't. I saw it open this morn—er—that is, we detectives have ways of knowing these matters.

MISS SCOTT (*nobly. Waving her hand*). No, no, do not urge me. I am above such things—besides she might come back and catch me.

MARJE (*taking her other hand*). But if we ask you as a favor to *us*? Think what might be found there.

MISS SCOTT (*hesitating*). I wonder whether she keeps her complexion in that drawer. I've always wanted to know what she uses—and then, as you say, it is really a patriotic duty——

ABBY LOU (*with a killing look*). As well as a favah to *us*.

MISS SCOTT (*coquettishly ogling him*). Go along with you, you naughty, naughty flatterer. Very well. (*Nobly*) For my country's sake I go! (*She goes out, D. L., leaving the girls to caper about and clap their hands with glee*)

ETHEL (*giggling*). I may be a little idiot, but on the whole I think we've got the joke on "Great Scott" this time.

MARJE. And the goods on Miss Hinkel, too. Do you know I'm almost sorry she's a spy. She was always so kind-hearted and forgiving about discords in the left hand and forgetting sharps and flats.

ABBY LOU (*starting as the door bell rings*). Quick,

girls—hide. (*They hurry to the window recess R. and hide behind the curtain as GRETCHEN ENTERS R. with ABIGAIL CORNTOSSSEL, an extremely countrified person in a paisley shawl, bonnet, and burdened with a bird cage, carpet bag and umbrella*)

ABIGAIL (*in a loud nasal tone*). Naow I s'pose you're the hired gal, ain't you?

GRETCHEN (*with a curtesy*). Ya, ya, Madame.

ABIGAIL (*putting on a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles and examining her critically*). Land a living, child, I ain't Madame. Abigail Cornrossel don't put on airs even if Hiram is fust seelect man, and she is President of the Cemetary Sodality, Vice-President of the Morn-ing Stars, Secretary of the Temprunce Union and Treasurer of the Sewing Circle and Missionary Society. Seems to me you're dretful spindly, child. Haow old be you anyhow?

GRETCHEN (*puzzled*). Nein, nein, Madame, I do not understand.

ABIGAIL (*throwing up her hands*). Nine yeou say? Dew tell. It's a downright shame. I'm a-going to give Ann Clemmons a piece of my mind hiring a little tunket like that to answer her front door for her.

GRETCHEN. I vill tell der Madame you was here. (EXIT D. L. ABIGAIL wanders about the room, examining the material of the draperies, the furniture, etc. She draws an experimental finger across one of the tables and examines it disgustedly) Dust! Just's I expected. Ann Clemmons always was slacker 'n Deacon Tupper's fust wife. I don't s'pose she's got her dishes washed, nor her kitchen red up this hour of the day. (*The girls watch her from behind the curtains in amazement.* MADAME CLEMANCE ENTERS D. L. hurriedly and stops short, staring at her visitor, appalled)

ABIGAIL (*rushing forward and pumping her limp hands enthusiastically*). Wal, Ann Clemmons, ef yeou ain't a sight for sore eyes. Growed real stoutish, hain't ye? What a poor, spindlin', lanky, pale-complected, slack-twisted, holler-chisted, no'count-lookin' critter yeou was in the old days! (*Looks her over*) Yeou must be

dewin' real well to be rigged up like a circus hoss spang in the middle of wash day.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*nervously*). Hush! Not so loud, someone might hear you. I'm not Ann Clemmons any longer——

ABIGAIL (*poking her facetiously*). Dew tell. Cotched a husband, hev yeou? Wal, s' I always says the fools ain't all dead yet, an' that proves it!

MADAME CLEMANCE. No, I am not married, but for the sake of expediency I have taken the more cultured and—and *comme il faut* name of Antoinette Clemance. I am the head of a select girl's finishing school, if you know what that is.

ABIGAIL (*dryly*). Yes, I know 'em, all looks an' no larnin'. The old deestric school was good enough for my ma to raise a fambly of ten children on, but now-days folks study French and Dago and all those heathenish languages and learn about a lightning bug's insides and waste good time looking at the moon through a spy glass and call 'emselfes eddicated. Finishin' schools, humph. I guess it's the parents bank rolls they're most successful at finishin' more likely.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*Pointing to the carpet bag and other paraphernalia*). Have you come to—(*Suppresses a groan*)—to make a visit?

ABIGAIL (*cheerily*). Land sakes alive, what in tunket do you s'pose Hiram 'n' the pigs would do without me? No, that ar carpet bag's full of Northern Spies. I thought you might relish 'em in a pie. I brought Nebuchanezzar along (*Pointing to the parrot*) for sociability. He's real company, that bird. He can jaw an' cuss so homelike yeou'd think for all the world 'twas Hi.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*glancing nervously at the clock which shows quarter to four, and then at the front door*). Wouldn't you like to lie down for a little nap after your tiresome trip?

ABIGAIL (*laughing*). Lay down in the plumb middle of the afternoon? (*She seats herself comfortably*) Shucks, I've got to git that evening train home or Hiram an' the pigs'll be real worried. But I jest got to

thinkin', and says I to myself, says I, New York's a dreadful long ways off an' out of things like. Poor Ann doesn't know what's goin' on at all. I'm goin' to run down and take her a mouthful o' news, I says. So here I be. (*She hunts in the bag for her knitting and commences on a sock*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*coldly*). Yes. Yes, so I see. (*Aside*). And Mrs. Neulie Ritchie coming at four! Cultured! *Comme il faut!* Heavens, what shall I do?

ABIGAIL (*rocking*). How comes it yeou ain't knittin', Ann? I'm ashamed of yeou. Any woman that sets with her hands folded these days is no more'n less a slacker, 'cording to Hiram 'n' the pigs.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*brightening with a new thought*). Suppose you come into my private sitting-room where we won't be disturbed and you shall teach me to knit.

ABIGAIL (*rising and gathering up her possessions*). And I can tell yeou all the news. Pumpkinville is gettin' real lively these days. (*Her voice drifts back as they go out D. L.*) We've hed two funerals in a month. (*A pause, during which the hidars peer out then duck back again as D. R. opens and admits BABE, BERT and DOTTY, disguised liberally with shoe polish, veils and an old lady get up*)

BABE (*regarding herself in the mirror*). How do I look, girls?

BERT (*giggling*). I couldn't tell you, Babe, I don't use that kind of language. But there's one thing certain, nobody would ever take us for Select Young Ladies.

DOTTY (*peevishly*). Come on, I'm smothering in this old veil. Let's get busy and do something. I don't think this detectiving is much fun.

BABE (*reproachfully*). Think of what we're doing for our country. Remember Joan of Arc and Helen of Troy and Betsy Ross.

BERT. Are you or are you not 100% American? (*During this conversation the other girls have been listening with lively interest, drawing in their heads when one of the newcomers looked their way*)

DOTTY (*sulkily*). Well, where's that paper you found?

BABE (*producing it*). Here it is. I saw her drop it in the hall, just now. (*They put their heads together over it*)

BERT (*laboriously*). Mi cuntree tiss of te, sweet land uf libattee uf tee icing. If that isn't a secret code what is it? It looks like somebody trying to spell the way a bagpipe sounds.

BABE. Or the way chop suey tastes! DOTTY *absently powders her nose through the veil with startling results. The others shout with laughter*)

BERT. Look at Dotty. She looks like the clown in the circus only the other way to.

DOTTY (*angrily*). You've got such a sense of humor, Bert, I should think you'd die laughing every morning when you look into your mirror.

BABE. There, there, girls, stop your quarreling. What's the bone of contention anyway?

BERT (*smartly*). Wouldn't you say the bone of contention was part of the family skeleton? (*Loud groans over the pun, echoed by groans from behind the curtains. They start*)

DOTTY. What was that? An echo?

BABE (*listening*). I don't know, but there's someone coming. It sounds like the fairy patter of "Great Scott's" Number seven, width D's.

BERT (*nervously*). She might'n understand our perfectly patriotic reasons for dressing up like this. Perhaps—

DOTTY. We'd better—

BABE. Hide! (*They hide in window recess L., peering out as MISS SCOTT ENTERS D. L., carrying several objects, among them a safety razor, suspenders and a box of cigarettes*)

MISS SCOTT (*displaying them, without at first noticing that her co-conspirators are gone*). It is even worse than we suspected. Hidden away under boxes of "Bridal Blush to Impart a Delicate Glow to the Complexion," "Lily White for Youthifying the Neck and

Arms" and "Floradora Vanishing Cream," I found—these shameful objects. (*With a start of surprise she notices that she is alone*) Dear me, the detectives are gone, such discriminating and delightful gentlemen, too. How very unfortunate, just when I have discovered such important clues. Can it be possible that Frieda Von Hinkel is a man? (*She regards herself thoughtfully in the mirror*) "Bridal Blush Bloom to Impart a Delightful Glow to the Complexion," "Lily White," "Floradora Vanishing Cream." Shocking. I wonder where one buys such vulgar things? (*A door slams off stage and steps approach along the hall. MISS SCOTT looks about nervously*) Really, it would be very awkward to be found with these masculine—er—tools. The pure patriotism of my motive might not be perfectly clear to everyone. I have nothing to be ashamed of—I am not ashamed, but— (*With great agility she leaps for and attains the shelter of the screen just as MISS HINKEL and GRETCHEN ENTER D. L.*)

GRETCHEN (*tearfully*). Ya. Ya. *Ich hatte es im Vorsaal. Ich kann es nicht finden.*

MISS HINKEL. Too bad, *meine liebe*. But fret not. You will find it soon. (*The detectives peer from behind their curtains and the screen, and show triumph at hearing German spoken*)

GRETCHEN (*half crying*). But ir nod, dey will find out vot I am doing. Ach, that would too bad be. (*She continues to hunt vainly for the lost paper. Far away a whistle gives two shrill, short toot-toots. MISS HINKEL shows great agitation. She points toward the windows*)

MISS HINKEL. Hearest you that? It is my signal. Every day the same—toot-toot. I must to my room go and wave a message—so. (*She waves her handkerchief wildly up and down while the amateur detectives register triumph. As she leaves, a loud nasal voice is heard off D. L.*)

ABIGAIL (*off stage*). Naow don't yeou fret yourself, Ann, it don't make a mite o' diff'runce to me where I set. (*MADAME CLEMANCE and ABIGAIL ENTER D. L.*) If you've got company comin' I sh'd admire to meet

'em. I ain't a bit stand-offish 'n' stuck up like some. If folks are respectable, church-going people an' good enough for yeou, they're good enough for me. That's the way I look at it. I believe in being democratic, 's I often say to Hiram an' the pigs. (*She sits placidly knitting while MADAME CLEMANCE looks at the clock nervously and fidgets about the room*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*aside*). Four o'clock. She'll be here any minute now. Cultured! *Comme il faut!* Oh, I shall lose Gertrude Evangeline Ermytrude if her mother once catches a glimpse of *her*. (*She shakes a fist behind ABIGAIL's placid back*)

ABIGAIL (*rocking comfortably*). You was askin' me whether Luke Peter was still courtin' Hetty Russell? Land-aliving, no. He ain't payin' her any attention now. They've been married all of two years. They've been a good many changes in Pumpkinville sence you was there. We've shingled the Town Hall with an Oyster Supper, and put a new cupola on the Methodist steeple with two chicken Pot-Pie Festivals and a Box-Party. We've—

MADAME CLEMANCE (*glancing desperately at the clock*). Are you sure you're not going to miss your train? It would be a shame to have you inconvenienced.

ABIGAIL (*comfortably*). My patience, but you're dretful fidgety, Ann Clemmons. Set daown an' make yourself t' home and don't fret about me. I'm as comfortable 's Old Tilly. That air train don't leave till nine this evening and I left Hiram and the pigs' supper ready for 'em. (*In fidgeting with the papers on the table MADAME CLEMANCE catches sight of the spy article and has a sudden brilliant idea. She glances from the article to ABIGAIL several times as the other drones on, the hidden detectives peering out occasionally*)

ABIGAIL (*displaying the sock proudly*). Yes siree, I'm on my forty-fifth pair o' socks. The Widder Martin up Cross Corners way has made an even hundred. Real harnsome knitting if I do say so, who shouldn't, the only socks that's fit for Uncle Sam's boys—the kind that won't run. I put up three hundred cans o' garden sass,

too. Way I look at it is folks has got to git together, rich folks and poor folks and the in-between kind and lick that pisen old Kaiser anyways we can! Me 'n Hiram 'n the pigs is 100% American! (*As she says this the hidden detectives all clap noiselessly*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*impressively*). Abigail, I'm going to take you into my confidence. I know you're a patriotic woman and (*Glancing at the paper*) all good citizens have a chance to render an important service to their country by catching and handing over to the Department of Justice the German spies who are thought to be working everywhere. There, what do you think about that?

ABIGAIL (*amazed*). Yeou don't tell! German spies! But haow in tunket would ye be able to tell a German spy ef ye see one on 'em. They don't wear signs on 'em nor nothing, I s'pose?

MADAME CLEMANCE. Oh, they usually wear some sort of a disguise so to look like something they're not. And they hide about in houses and public buildings to listen to what people are saying. (*The hidden "detectives" show great agitation at this remark, which deepens into undisguised uneasiness and alarm at the following*)

ABIGAIL (*stabbing fiercely at the air with her knitting needle*). Wal, all is ef ever I ketch anybody dressing up in any of them disguises raound where I be I'll give 'em something they'll remember to their dyin' day, sure's my name's Abigail Corntossel. Jest let me lay eyes on one, that's all. (*The "detectives" hurriedly and unanimously withdraw their heads*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*glancing at the clock, then leaning toward ABIGAIL and fairly hissing out the words*). Abigail, do you want to help me catch a German spy?

ABIGAIL (*with great emphasis, rolling up her sleeves*). I sartain do. And what's more I want to hev the fust chanet at em when we've cotched 'em.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*mysteriously*). A certain woman is coming here this afternoon for the ostensible purpose of placing her girl, Gertrude Evangeline Ermyntude in my school. But I have my suspicions of her though

so far I have no real proofs. Now I want you to hide somewhere in this room, where you can hear everything that is said and tell me what you think of her afterward. Only there's one important thing. She must not suspect that you are here or all is lost—remember she *must not suspect* you are here. Do you understand?

ABIGAIL (*doubtfully*). Somehow I don't seem to take to the idee exactly, as the tramp said when he seed the woodpile. Supposen we jest up 'n' ask her point blank an' open 'n' above board if she's a spy. (*The door bell rings*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*frantically*). No! No! That would spoil everything. (*She fairly drags ABIGAIL up and pushes her across to the couch and down behind, pressing her head down with the motion of one packing a too-full trunk*) Stay there! Don't move or stir till after she's gone, for your country's sake (*Aside*) and mine.

GRETCHEN (*off R.*). Haf you got your ticket? You cannot herein kommen mitoud thot ticket.

VOICE OF MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*off R., coldly*). Here is my card. This is Madame Clemance's Select School for Select Young Ladies I presume?

GRETCHEN (*off R.*). Ya! Ya! Madame, you haf—vat iss it Miss Bertha say?—you haf der nail on der head hitten. (*During this conversation MRS. CLEMANCE has hastily scrambled into her pose at the table, finger on cheek, apparently absorbed in "Burton's Great Thoughts for All the Year."*) GRETCHEN ushers in MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE, D. R., and disappears)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*not appearing to notice the new-comer, as if to herself*). "True worth lies in being not seeming"—ah, how true that is. What a noble thought. How chastely expressed.

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*impressed*). Ahem! Madame Clemance, I believe? You must pardon me for interrupting your studies.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*starting and rising gracefully*). Ah, Mrs. Neulie Ritchie! Yes, I was spending a few moments with the great minds of the ages! And what

minds they were, too, were they not,—Pluto, and Democrats, and Nero, and—hem, Hamlet. We do not find them in these degenerate days. Ah me!

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*sighing*). Ah me!

MADAME CLEMANCE (*as her visitor is about to seat herself on the couch*). No! No! Not the couch, by all means, *not* the couch. You will be more comfortable here in this chair. (*They seat themselves. The hidlers peer out and bob in again at intervals during the following conversation*) Let me see, I have so much upon my mind it is hard to think of purely worldly matters. What was it about which you wished to consult me, Mrs. Neulie Ritchie?

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE. My daughter, Gertrude Evangeline Ermyntitude.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*appearing to recollect*). Ah, yes! yes! The dear child. I quite long to have her in my little flock. There are so few select young ladies these days, Mrs. Neulie Ritchie, whom I can conscientiously welcome to my school. Ah me!

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*sighing and shaking her head*). Ah me!

MADAME CLEMANCE. Now I may say, without boasting, I think that I have an exceptional class of young ladies here. (*The girls bridle and preen themselves*) So truly feminine! (*MARJE, ETHEL, and ABBY LOU start and look down at their masculine garb thoughtfully*) So dainty and attractive! (*The other three girls appear agitated*) So—so *comme il faut*! So very very *comme il faut*. And my teachers, though few in number, are ladies of culture. (*MISS SCOTT exhibits great distress and disappears behind her screen*) The atmosphere of the place is uplifting and extremely patriotic. You see I am holding nothing from you! (*ABIGAIL peers out and MADAME CLEMANCE signals frantically but surreptitiously for her to hide again*)

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE. Gertrude Evangeline Ermyntitude is an exceptional child, very sensitive, very. She cannot bear the least criticism. She has, I may say, a great deal of temperament, if you understand what I mean?

MADAME CLEMANCE. I think I do understand. (*Aside*) She means temper.

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE. Your terms are?

MADAME CLEMANCE (*sweetly*). Very reasonable. (*The door bell rings. Aside*) I wonder who that can be just at the critical moment too. (*Aloud*) I am almost ashamed to mention it—one thousand a year, half in advance. A mere trifle.

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*taking out her check book*). Well, I think the school will do——

GRETCHEN ENTERS, D. R., *with a card which she hands*
MADAME CLEMANCE

MADAME CLEMANCE (*reading*). “Mary Murphy, Detective the Secret Service.” (*Nervously*) I think you had better say I am not at home, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN. Ya,—er ya-as, Madame, sehr gut!

[EXIT, D. R.]

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*poising fountain pen over book*). Shall I make it out to you personally, Madame Clemance?

MADAME CLEMANCE. Yes, if you please. (*An argument is heard off R.*)

GRETCHEN (*excitedly*). Bot Madame Clemance say she iss nod at home.

MARY MURPHY (*flinging open the door*). We'll see about thot! Government business, Madam.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*casting an agonized glance at MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE*). One moment—just one moment, if you please!

ENTER MARY MURPHY, D. R.

MARY MURPHY (*impressively folding her arms*). Madame, the Sacret Sarvice has traced the workings av a German Spy to your house an' 'tis me duty as an officer av th' law to search it immadiately if not sooner. (*There is a great commotion of the curtains and the screen*)

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*rising indignantly*). A spy! Here! Horrors and it was to this place that I was about to entrust my precious, my sensitive Gertrude Evangeline Ermyntitude.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*trying to appease her*). Wait, there is some mistake, I assure you. How could there be a spy in my school?

MARY MURPHY (*gesturing about the room*). They're iverywhere. Why, it wudn't surprise me at all at all to foind wan av the varmints skulkin' in this very room this moment, behind that screen yonder, perhaps or th' windy cur-rtains or thot couch——

MADAME CLEMANCE (*shrieking*). Oh, no! No! Not behind the couch! Never behind the couch!

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*moving majestically toward D. R.*). I will say good afternoon to you, Madame Clemance.

ABIGAIL (*suddenly bounding from her hiding place and catching the departing visitor firmly and grimly by the sleeve*). No, yeou don't! Not whilest Abigail Corntossel's raound. (*She turns to MARY MURPHY*) Officer, arrest this woman! She's a German Spy!

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*indignantly, looking at ABIGAIL through her lorgnette*). How dare you address me, you ill-bred person? I've never been introduced to you. (*MARY MURPHY looks uncertainly from one to the other, while MADAME CLEMANCE wrings her hands*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*faintly*). I feel that in another moment I shall faint away. (*She staggers against the screen, upsetting it and revealing MISS AUGUSTA SCOTT, her hands full of masculine possessions*) Ahh! (*Shrieking loudly*) Ahhhh!

MARY MURPHY (*sternly*). An' phwat are yez doin' hidin' behint there? Spake up, 'tis very suspicious yez look!

MISS SCOTT (*confused*). Dear me, this is most embarrassing, but let me explain—— (*A loud sneeze is heard from behind the window curtains R. and MARY MURPHY springs to them and drags out the three "detectives" in masculine garb, wigs and beards somewhat awry*)

MARY MURPHY (*hand to her head*). More av thim! Sure th' place is a regular spy factory! (*She raps ETHEL sharply with her stick*) Coom, coom, young felly, phwhat have yez got to say fer ye silf?

ETHEL (*giggling shrilly*). Tee-hee! Tee-hee! What a joke! Hee-hee!

MADAME CLEMANCE. Ethel Barrett! I'd know that giggle if I heard it at the North Pole!

MARY MURPHY (*to MARJE in white wig and whiskers*). An' who are yez, auld gentleman?

MARJE (*shrilly*). None of your business! (*She bursts into tears*)

MADAME CLEMANCE. And Marjorie Tucker!

MARY MURPHY (*amazed*). Well, I'll be domned! Howsomever there's nothing fer me to do but arrist the lot av yez. (MISS HINKEL ENTERS, D. L., *with her embroidery bag*)

ABBY LOU (*taking off her moustache and gesturing with it*). That's the one you're looking for, officer. That's your spy. (*All stare at MISS HINKEL*)

MADAME CLEMANCE (*moaning*). And Abby Lou Carteret! Shameless girl!

MISS SCOTT (*rushing forward*). Yes, Officer, this—this female has disgraced her sex by being a man!

MISS HINKEL (*angrily*). Lieber Himmel, is it you haf all your wits gelosten?

MISS SCOTT (*dramatically*). False creature. (*Displaying the razor, suspenders and cigarettes*) I don't suppose you will deny that these are your property.

MISS HINKEL (*snatching them*). And I do nod suppose you will deny that they are *not* yours!

ETHEL. Not half an hour ago we heard her say that she was going to her room to wave a message to someone out of her window. So! (*She illustrates vigorously with her handkerchief*)

MARY MURPHY (*to MISS HINKEL*). Is that so?

MISS HINKEL (*defiantly*). I was not aware that there vas any law in this so-free countree that a lady should not from her window gewave!

MARJE (*pointing to the embroidery bag*). She has a bomb in that bag.

MARY MURPHY (*hastily leaping backward*). Saints presarve us, a bomb, is it?

ETHEL (*pointing to MISS HINKEL's elaborate yellow hair*). And what's more she has a wig on.

MISS SCOTT (*vindictively*). At last, impostor, the world shall see you in your true colors. (*She jerks the wig away—and discloses—gray hair, neatly parted and pinned in a prim knot behind. All stare in amazement*)

ABIGAIL. Fer the land's sakes! Dew tell! Seems to me yeou've cought more'n you bargained for, as th' skunk said tew the man when he cotched him in the rat trap.

MARJE (*faltering*). But the bomb——

MISS HINKEL (*quietly*). You wish to see it? Ver' well. (*She reaches into her bag and draws out a ball of gray yarn and a half knit woolen stocking*) Here iss your bomb!

MADAME CLEMANCE (*sternly*). Miss Hinkel please explain yourself. Why have you been deceiving us in this way?

MISS HINKEL (*proudly, facing them all*). I vill explain. It iss ver' simple. I am, you see (*She points to her hair*) an old womans. I am fifty year old. My son, Karl, he vant to join the navy to fight der Kaiser but I haf no moneys. So I say to heem, "Go, it iss your duty. You are von American, go!" and I got vat you say, a chob. But nobody wants an old womans so I make myself young.

MISS SCOTT (*faltering*). But the razor, and the signals out of the window?

MISS HINKEL (*sadly*). Dose thing I buy for my boy. Also for him I knit the stockings when nobody see me. Efery night he make toot-toot on a whistle when his submarine chaser go by, and efery night I wave! So! (*She waves her handkerchief then applies it to her eyes*) He sail soon. I vant heem to go—am I not too an Americain, me? But it iss—not—easy——

MISS SCOTT (*putting an arm round her*). There, there! You poor soul, cry on me all you want to. I haven't anything on that salt water will spot.



MARY MURPHY (*wiping her eyes and turning on ABIGAIL, pointing to MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE*). So you claim this lady is a spy, do you?

MADAME CLEMANCE (*hasting*). No, no, that was all a mistake, officer. She is the mother of one of my new scholars.

MRS. NEULIE RITCHIE (*angrily*). Not at all! Not at all! This school would never do for one as sensitive as Gertrude Evangeline Ermyntude! (*She flounces out, D. R.*)

MARY MURPHY. Thin where is me spy? Fer a spy Oi'll have before Oi lave the place.

GRETCHEN ENTERS, D. L. *On seeing her the other three girls rush from their hiding place and pounce upon her.*

THE THREE (*in chorus*). Officer, here's your spy.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*wildly*). Bertha, Dorothy, Margaret! What have you done to yourselves? Oh my poor school! Oh my poor head! (*She clasps it dismally*)

ABIGAIL (*vigorously*). Nonsense! That poor little dote of a critter is no more'n a spy than Hiram an' the pigs. The very idee.

BERT (*producing the paper and handing it triumphantly to MARY MURPHY*). Then what is she writing in this secret code for? She dropped this paper with her own hand.

MARY MURPHY (*reading*). Mi cuntree tiss uf te, sweet land uf libatee uf tee icing—Now this lukes very suspiciousable to me! (*Sternly to the quaking GRETCHEN*) Come, now, confess freely what it all manes and ray-mimber whatever yez say will be used agin yez.

GRETCHEN (*sniffing*). Dese fräuleins much laughings off me make, so I want dem not to see. But I wish a goot Americans to be so I write dot— (*She points*)

MARY MURPHY (*staring at the paper*). Was it Hebrew you're afther writin'? Sure thot's the language av only a part av America—'tis not the official spache yit.

GRETCHEN. Nein, nein, I was writing dose song der fräuleins seeng, dose America songs—

(*She sings*) My countree 'tis uf thee

Swest lan' uf libertee

Uf thee I sing!

(*All applaud. The girls put their arms affectionately around GRETCHEN*)

BERT. Will you forgive us, Gretchen? Here you were a better American than we were, all the time.

BABE. And we'll teach you English so you'll be spieling it away like any of us in a jiffy.

DOTTY (*laughing*). Not like your English, I hope, Babe! (*They all laugh*)

ABIGAIL (*admiring MISS HINKEL'S sock*). Ain't that sock knit beautiful? You have a real *talent* for heels. (*MARJE, ETHEL and ABBY LOU gather about them*)

MARJE (*eagerly*). Do teach me to knit. I'll make a sweater for Cousin George.

ETHEL. And I'll knit a muffler for Jimmie Brown.

ABBY LOU. Show me, too. Ah haven't got anybody "Ovah There" but all the boys are ouh boys, after all. That's what the Red Cross Lady meant this morning, only we didn't understand. We had bettah give up trying to be detectives and do the things we can do, even if they're not so much fun.

MARY MURPHY (*looking from one to the other*). Here, here, this won't do! I was sint here to git a spy and capture wan I will if it takes all noight.

MADAME CLEMANCE. I'm sure you must be mistaken. All my school is right here—— (*She points to the groups before her*)

ETHEL. Except Miss Smith! She's out in her motor boat somewhere. (*The telephone rings and MARY MURPHY answers it*)

MARY MURPHY. Hello! Hello! Yis 'tis me an' no wan ilse. Phwhat's thot? Ye've captured him and he's a her afther all? She's been what? Oh yis, takin' information to the submarines in a motor boat, yez say? Bad cess till her. Calls hersilf Gladys Smith, but it ought to be Gertrude Schmidt av Berlin? And yez

don want anny more spies fer the afthornoon? All right—good-bye! (*She hangs up the receiver*)

ALL (*in chorus*). Gladys Smith! Whoever heard of such a thing! (*The girls lead MISS HINKEL to the piano and gather about her*)

MARY MURPHY. Sure yez see iverything cooms out ahl right in the ind, only sometimes 'tis the wrong ind, that's all.

MADAME CLEMANCE (*mournfully*). But I've lost a new scholar. I don't see where I've gained much by this afternoon's work.

ABIGAIL. Well, naow, Ann, I ain't so certain. Seems to me we've bad a real lively, exciting old-fashioned game of "I Spy!" I only wist Hiram an' the pigs had been here to enjoy it too! (*The girls begin to sing "America" softly*)

MARY MURPHY (*cheerily*). Don't yez be so shure av it, Madame Clemance. Maybe 'tis luck this afternoon's brought yez. Sure me brother Tim Murphy, boss av the Second District, has been looking fer a school fer his two girls, Nora and Noreen. Oi'll tell him about this an' I'm thinking 'twill do fer him foiné. Fer he's been luki'g fer a place that's 100% American! (*The music of the girls' singing swells louder as the curtain descends*)

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